Introduction: Barcelona and Modernity

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For Joana Crespi, who taught me Catalan, introduced me to the streets of Barcelona, and invited me to my first dry martini at Can Boadas; *in memoriam*

Great Enchantress; Rose of Fire; Manchester of Spain; Paris of the South; City of Bombs; City of Marvels; City of Architects; Olympic Village; Design Capital; Gastronomic Center; Soccer Powerhouse; Tourist Mecca; Cultural Forum; International Hot Spot: Modern Barcelona has been, and continues to be, many things to many people. For Rubén Darío, it was a place of cosmopolitan refinement, home to the only modernist "brotherhood" in all of Spain (254). For Jean Genet, it was a place of exquisitely abject desire populated by beggars, thieves, queers, and whores (18). For designer Javier Mariscal, it is a place of bars and sky and waves, as his famous poster from 1979 attests: *Bar cel ona*. If Darío yearned for a select fraternity of sophisticated artists, and Genet for a sordid congregation of divine outlaws, Mariscal, who later created the happy Olympic mascot Cobi, has had his ear pressed to the profitable pulse of the culture industry. Broken down and built back up, *Bar cel ona* can be marketed and consumed —happily, giddily, drunkenly—as a place of perfect postmodern pomp where more culturally motivated visitors can sip a beer in the *Quatre Gats* (a beer house-café made famous by Picasso) and buy trinkets that commemorate the effective desacralization of the Sagrada Família (Antoni Gaudí's great unfinished expiatory temple) and where more raucously motivated visitors can fry themselves on newly sanded beaches and vomit their cold Northern repression onto steamy summer streets. The capital of Catalonia, a nation (*malgré* the Partido Popular) without a state (*malgré* Esquerra Republicana), Barcelona is a metropolis in which sangria, Mexican sombreros, and tapas, Dior, Gucci, and Armani, Starbucks and McDonalds, Deutsche Bank and ING, coexist —such a gentle, deceptive word— alongside such international successes as Miró, Gaudí, and Tàpies and such national specialties, some of them quaintly seasonal, as panellets and pa amb tomàquet, calçots and caganers, sardines and sardanas. In its vacillations between the material and symbolic manifestations of global capital and local pride, Barcelona is far from unique; and yet, *as with so many other places*, its

movers and shakers strive to present it as unique, as marvelous and enchanting, as far removed from the industrial grime and class turmoil of times gone by. Even Manchester, which, like London, Leeds, and Birmingham, led Engels to speak of the city in general as "a strange thing" marked by "barbarous indifference, hard egotism ... and nameless misery" (68, 69), even Manchester, after all, has tried to refashion itself.

Even though unicity can serve as a powerfully general lure (everyone, everything, everyplace is unique) or, more simply, even though Barcelona can be like so many other cities, it has in fact been remarkably adept at refashioning itself, so much so that it would come as little surprise if Manchester dreamt of becoming the Barcelona of Britain —were cities, in contrast to people, able to dream, desire, think or do anything at all. Refashioning, as a modification of what is *à la mode*, is here apposite, for it is in modernity, indeed as modernity, at least as Baudelaire so masterfully styled it, that fashion comes to the fore in the play of beauty, which is no longer simply and solely the stuff of eternal truths and invariable forms but also, and quite vertiginously, the fluff of the moment, the "relative, circumstantial element" (3) that passes.[1] Double and contradictory as Baudelaire conceives it, beauty is modern, *particularly so*, when it flits fleetingly away, when it outstrips or falls short of the permanence and staid stability of classical beauty (which has its own modernities). "This transitory, fugitive element, whose metamorphoses are so rapid, must on no account be despised or dispensed with," Baudelaire asserts, because "[b]y neglecting it, you cannot fail to tumble into the abyss of an abstract and interminable beauty, like that of the first woman before the fall of man" (13). It is curious, no doubt, that security from an abyssal fall can best be purchased (ah, that is the word) by giving oneself over and unto that which runs away, which ever so concretely comes to an end: *sic transit gloria mundi*.

The glories of the world pass, so much fleeting beauty, so many vain fashions, that leave in their wake the desire for more. The point is not idle. Internationally renowned art critic Robert Hughes opens his bestselling book on Barcelona (published just in time for the 1992 Olympics) by invoking the Devil's temptation of Christ that gives the Tibidabo mountain that overlooks the city its name. Firmly entrenched in the values of secular exchange, Hughes intones: "Jesus refused the offer; the modern visitor need not" (3). What Hughes, an outsider, points to is, *mutatis mutandis*, what many an insider has

1. Of course, the "relative, circumstantial element" (3) that passes can leave, in its passing, an impression, more or less enduring (depending on the circumstances and the thinking subject, to be sure), of something that does not quite pass: the sketch, the dress, the bibelot, and so on.

pointed to: namely, the wealth of the city's commercial and cultural offerings, its art and industry, its openness, as port, to the business of the world. Long before the late twentieth-century secularism of Hughes, none other than Jacint Verdaguer, the most distinguished poet of the Catalan *Renaixença*, sings in his ode "A Barcelona" the busy bounty of the sea: "La mar, un dia esclava del teu poder, te crida, / com dos portells obrint-te Suez i Panamà: / quiscun amb tota una Índia rienta te convida, amb l'Àssia, les Amèriques, la terra i l'occeà [sic]" (33). First presented in the *Jocs Florals* of 1883, Verdaguer's ode links the city's prosperity and its genius —"aqueixa estrella que et guia"— to the respectful maintenance of the Catholic faith: "un poble que creu no pot morir" and, more resoundingly, "Qui enfonsa o alça els pobles és Déu, que els ha creat" (33). With all of its spiritual sincerity, the ode, already ripe for patriotic propaganda, was promptly converted into municipal publicity: City Hall, under mayor Francesc Rius i Taulet's direction, had 100,000 copies printed in order to, as Verdaguer himself notes, "repartir-la profusament i en particular fer-la conèixer als nois de les escoles públiques" (191, n. 1). What exactly the schoolchildren learned from Verdaguer's poem, no less than what exactly the politicians and the poet wanted them to learn, may be a matter of speculation (a word richly resonant in the context of Barcelona's urban expansion), but along with the values of *patria*, *fides*, and *amor* championed in the *Jocs Florals*, trade, profit, and power were surely, if somewhat more subtly, at stake. Barcelona, even at its most devout, had its figurative eyes placed on other places, part and parcel of what Marx understood—critically, needless to say—as the drive to a world market. The Suez and the Panama canals that Verdaguer so proudly cites in relation to Barcelona's maritime prowess are, after all, not merely marvels of technology but monuments to imperialism. Now, while there was nothing new about the mixture of God and gold, what was new was the speed and efficiency with which things, thoughts, and people could move and, more specifically, with which Catalonia, long hindered by centralist forces beyond it, could regain a prominent place in the world.

Newness is the operative word here, linked, in its conceptual sweep, to modernity and its often frenetic, fleeting (re)fashionings. Idelfons Cerdà, engineer of Barcelona's *Eixample*, the rationally planned mid-nineteenth-century expansion to which Verdaguer alludes in his poem, justified his plan by identifying a break in history: a new age, a new city, a "nueva civilización que se levanta joven, vigorosa y prepotente, montada en el vapor y armada de la electricidad" (15). The new civilization that Cerdà esteemed was not, as he well knew, without problems: behind and below the proliferation of worldly goods and services, of enhanced communication and transportation, there still

festered an old order of poverty, sickness, inequality, and injustice. Much maligned as Cerdà has been (modernist architect and Catalanist politician Josep Puig i Cadafalch called Cerdà's plan "una malura geomètrica," 154; others have been even less kind), his inspiration was not just technological (steam movement) but also utopian socialist (human movement), and his aim was, as he expressly notes in his *Teoría general de la urbanización*, to realize a city that would be to the benefit of each and every individual, that is to say a city for everyone.[2] Revolted by the terrible conditions of the growing working class, and by the potential for revolt of a more physically violent sort, he argued for a city of hygienic, humanitarian, evenly distributed spaces and services in which class differences would be greatly assuaged if not overcome. He was not alone. Josep Anselm Clavé, also influenced by utopian socialist thought, sought to harmonize society by way of music, creating choral societies for workers, the celebrated *Cors de Clavé*. Interestingly, the first chapter of Dolors Monserdà's Catholic feminist novel *La fabricanta* opens with a visit to a performance of Clavé's choir in the Jardins de l'Euterpe, "en l'espai dels terrenos que avui [1904] ocupen, a l'esquerra del passeig de Gràcia, les cases situades entre els carrers de València i de Mallorca" (39), and ends with a stroll down a dark, deserted, and still rural Passeig de Gràcia.[3] The bucolic feel of the thoroughfare that connected the old walled city of Barcelona to the town of Gràcia and that became a central avenue of the *Eixample* had acquired a nostalgic luster by the time Monserdà dared to do what other women may have only dreamt of doing: write and publish fiction.

For if speculation in real estate laid waste to the gardens and open spaces that had been part of Cerdà's original plan; if the opulent buildings with their scintillating façades that are today a major tourist draw were often mounted —as progressive Catalanist Valentí Almirall deplored—[4] with ill-gotten colonial gains; and if the individual, as in Narcís Oller's "El transplantat," could end up crossing "entre mils i

2. Cerdà writes of "las necesidades que han producido y siguen produciendo y acrecentando en la humanidad siempre activa, los últimos descubrimientos y adelantos que no pertenecen como los de otros tiempos á una sola clase ó á un reducido número de privilegiados, que nadie puede monopolizar, que están al alcance de todos y de cada uno de los individuos, aun del mas [sic] desgraciado" (12).

3. Monserdà writes that, "la baixada a la ciutat pel desert i fosc passeig de Gràcia, ja que la migrada llum dels fanals, en lloc de reflectir-se com avui en les parets de les cases, lliscant pel dessobre de la llarga filera de pedrissos i rosers que s'aixecaven a banda i banda de la via, anava a perdre's per entre les tenebres d'immensos camps de conreu" (50).

4. The passage from Almirall is worth reproducing: "[c]uando se recorren las calles, anchas y largas, aún a medio edificar, de la Barcelona nueva, se pueden apreciar fastuosas y elegantes construcciones. Pues bien, de cada diez de esas casas sólo habrá una cuyo propietario se haya enriquecido en el país por medio del comercio laborioso o de la industria. Los nababs, llegados de América, y algunos arribistas de la Bolsa, son dueños de la mayoría o, mejor dicho, de la casi totalidad de tan suntuosos edificios" (176).

mils persones com ombra indiferent" (*Contes* 41), the city nonetheless provided opportunities for collectivization and experimentation among women, workers, artists, homosexuals, freethinkers, Republicans, avantguardists, revolutionaries, and others. Size matters, and if greater numbers translate into greater possibilities for friction, exploitation, and insecurity, they also translate into greater possibilities for freedom. "Contra tots els prejudicis romàntics resulta que el ciutadà d'una metròpoli és, en tots els ordres, més lliure que el d'una masia del Montseny. La suma d'opinions, tota sola, té una força que no poden desconèixer ni els temperaments més típicament autocràtics" (109): so wrote Carles Soldevila in 1925, who also extolled the "gust de servar l'incògnit a través de la multitud desconeguda" (112). Soldevila, at least in his capacity as *flâneur* and urban chronicler, is arguably one of Baudelaire's closest heirs in Barcelona, and it thus is hardly surprising that he was a supporter of Josep Planes, whom another great chronicler of Barcelona, Josep Maria de Sagarra, hailed as a pioneer of investigative and —as Planes himself apparently preferred— "decorative" journalism. Planes, like Sebastià Gasch and others, demonstrated a fascination with the night life that came to flourish in the city after the advent of electricity, staged most spectacularly in the World's Fair of 1929 though present, in much more modest form, since the World's Fair of 1888. This is the twenty-four hour city of the burgeoning entertainment industry, with cinema, the circus, popular theater, cabarets, music halls, bars, jazz clubs, sporting events, and even venues for bullfights and flamenco at once expanding and altering the cast of metropolitan characters beyond the conservative shopkeepers (Santiago Rusiñol's emblematic Senyor Esteve), imposing industrialists, restless workers, disaffected aesthetes, and brooding revolutionaries, to encompass the underworld of gangsters, flimflam men, cancan girls, pimps, and prostitutes.

In many respects, a good deal of the social topography of today's city is in place by the early twentieth century, with Pedralbes, Sarrià, and the Eixample at a far remove, economically and symbolically speaking, from the Raval or *Barri "Xino."* Despite the "espectacle de barreja i confraternitat" (Oller, *Contes* 34), despite the rubbing together of people that could issue in polished refinement (Soldevila 108), the city, like perhaps all cities, remained divided by class, its "rubbing together" of people at times a source of considerable, even violent, irritation and conflict. The avant-garde poet Joan Salvat-Papasseit, writing in 1919, provides a "map" of Barcelona in which the splendor and misery of the city is given graphic, almost telegraphic, form. In "Plànol," the vertical force of a limited number of verbal signs exceeds the more conventional horizontal force of syntax: from the first or, more precisely, top line of "MONT AVENTÍ" (with its

Roman resonance) down through "decadència," "església," "xalets," "aristocracia," "vici," and "ironía en el crim" to "surburbis" (in the sense of beneath or below the urban, the lower depths), "rameres pobres," "hospital" (in the sense of a place for the sick and dying poor), "la galera," "honradesa," and "fam," Salvat charts a viciously hierarchal order in which "El sol ho encén tot / —Però no ho consum" (58-59). Given the textual and extratextual circumstances, the sun that ignites everything without consuming it suggests less a peaceful enlightenment than an enlightened struggle, a brilliant conflagration fuelled by class-consciousness and artistic innovation. Baptized during the time that Santiago Salvador, responsible for a bloody attack on the Liceu in 1893, was tried and executed along with other anarchists (a coincidence that the poet mythified), Salvat construed himself as "l'incendiari de mots d'adolescent" (67) and was a key figure in the introduction and dissemination of what Hughes, in another work, has called the shock of the new: a more contentious and non-conformist version of the newness that Cerdà and others understood as the motor of progress, order, and general wellbeing. The difference is significant, for modernity, as that which is just now passing, as (re)fashioning and newness, is far from being a unified phenomenon; in fact, if Baudelaire presents modernity as part of a dual conception of beauty, it is a part that has parts of its own.

Many people have observed that Barcelona is really at least three cities (Ciutat Vella, the Eixample, and a periphery that extends up and down the coast), but modernity is multiple as well. Although any attempt at periodization is questionable, even hubristic, it is nonetheless possible to speak of four *overlapping* modernities: one, marked by the triumph of bourgeois liberalism, that runs from the rise of industrialism, the demolition of the city walls, and Cerdà's planned expansion to the Universal Exposition of 1888 and beyond; another, marked by the growing contestation of bourgeois hegemony, that runs from the first bouts of Anarchist direct action or terrorism (depending on one's perspective) in the 1890s through the popular uprising against the mobilization of troops to Morocco in 1909 known as the *Setmana Tràgica* or *Setmana Gloriosa* (again, depending on one's perspective) and the revolutionary movements of the Civil War to the triumph of Franco; a third, under Franco, marked by a technocratic capitalism hostile to civil liberties and democratic process and largely oblivious or indifferent to historical and environmental preservation; and a fourth, generally called postmodern, in which neoliberal global capitalism grapples with environmentalism, historical memory, and the rights of citizens and neighbors. Multiple as modernity is, it has become a commonplace (perhaps because it is true) to say that in the Iberian peninsula modernity was forged in Barcelona first, and it is common, if

not yet a commonplace, to present this as a triumph rather than a problem, as if modernity's ties to ever more efficient and devastating ways to kill and destroy did not, could not, cast a shadow on the plethora of lushly decorative objects and sensuous services —statues by Llimona and Miró, buildings by Domènech i Montaner and Bofill, vases by Dionís Renart, jewels by the Masriera family, arias by Montserrat Caballé, and cuisine by Ferran Adrià— that most people associate with pleasure.

Although the lure of pleasure may be ageless (as some might say), the popularization and commodification of the lure of pleasure, its fractured democratic expansion and worldwide massification, finds its most tantalizing materialization in the World's Fairs that begin in the mid-nineteenth century. This, at any rate, is Walter Benjamin's assessment, one that has proved compelling to students and scholars of the city. For Benjamin, "[t]he framework of the entertainment industry has not yet been formed" until the World's Fair. What the Fairs inaugurate is a sumptuous feast of merchandise spread out before the avid eyes of new consumers (yet another avatar of the new) or, more accurately, *potential* new consumers. The *promesse de bonheur* that Baudelaire ascribes to Stendhal (Stendhal's exact phrasing is slightly different) is here a promise of material wellbeing. As I have elsewhere noted, the Fairs or Expositions become, as Flaubert puts it in his *Dictionnaire des idées reçues*, a "sujet de délire du XIXe siècle" (351) and, as Benjamin puts it, "sites of pilgrimages to the commodity fetish" (151).[5] The delirium of the nineteenth century, which seems to intensify as time passes, might just be that of ever-expanding commodification and, as Benjamin adds, entertainment, by which people "submit to being manipulated while enjoying their alienation from themselves and others" (152). Manipulation is a relative term (normally implying an agent, a manipulator), for in many respects the 1888 World's Fair helps to haul control back into the hands of Catalans and to raise awareness, as it were, of the singularity of Catalonia, the first part of Spain to host an event more commonly the province of national than regional capitals.

Bluntly put, the 1888 Exposition served as spectacular proof of the transformation of the city from a militarized fortress controlled from Madrid into a monumental market open to the world; the Fair takes place, after all, on the grounds of the much-reviled Ciutadella that owed its punitive existence to the Bourbon victory in the War of Spanish Succession. Josep Yxart, bewitched by the riches before him, fancied the city in which they were displayed as "algo continental y

5. See my "Modern Spaces: Building Barcelona," from which I extract this and the following sentence.

no peninsular, con sus negras chimeneas de suburbio inglés, con sus *restaurants* y sus librerías de bulevar parisiense, con sus jarcias y velas sobre un mar de puerto italiano" (165). While Yxart found in the Fair proof of a difference between Catalonia and the rest of Spain (and similarities between Catalonia and other European nations), others, including famed realist writer Narcís Oller, capitalized on the difference, finding in it fodder for their Catalanism.[6] If commodity fetishism is what Benjamin most thickly associates with the Expositions, nationalism is also at play, but a nationalism that comes to the fore in an international (though by no means Internationalist) frame. The national implications of the International Expositions are well known: under the guise of liberal trade (along with militarism, the mainstay of colonialism), Western nations jockeyed for position. Seduced and invigorated by the prospects of modernization and economic success, many Catalans came to imagine Catalonia, and not just Spain, as a nation among nations, and to do so more realistically than they had for a long time before. Perhaps not surprisingly, the Catalan capital, not able to marshal military support of its own, came to rely not just on industrial production but also on art and design. In the words of Cristina and Eduardo Mendoza: "la Exposición fue el trampolín del Modernismo y el Modernismo se convirtió a partir de ese momento en la marca de fábrica de Barcelona" (74). The trademark endures, not in the construction of yet more modernist buildings but in their preservation, rehabilitation, expansion (as in the Palau de la Música Catalana), and promotion as well as in the very "experience" of the city. The *Ruta Modernista*, an itinerary for pedestrians and tour buses alike, directs the otherwise errant *flâneur* to what "really matters," subjecting the contingencies of the street to a masterful, artful rationale.

Rational, aesthetic-minded mastery may well be a phrase more suited to *Noucentisme* than *Modernisme*, inasmuch as *Noucentisme* promoted a well-ordered city arbitrated by a group of select intellectuals, a city of civility in the face of contingency, of tranquility amid the hustle and bustle, and of classical Mediterranean features at home with modernity. The select intellectuals included the linguist Pompeu Fabra, the politician Enric Prat de la Riba, the poet Josep Carner, and, most importantly, writer and critic Eugeni d'Ors, whose celebration of urbanity assumed a culturally imperial (and imperialist) form. Reality, however, would prove more imperious than any hierarchically ordered Imperialist plan, more restive than any putatively

6. As Oller writes in his *Memòries*: "Tot aquell traüt, tota aquella febre de treball mai vista aquí, tot aquell esforç titànic que donava tan brava mostra de les nostres ocultes energies i de la nostra set de progrés, encenien la meva imaginació, el meu catalanisme, la fe posada en aquest poble, l'esperança en dies millors" (105).

harmonious synthesis of classicism and modernity, and, for that matter, more destructive than any avant-garde paean to destruction. War, exile, dictatorship, poverty, injustice, hunger (given narrative form in such works as Carmen Laforet's *Nada* and Mercè Rodoreda's *La plaça del Diamant*), and mass migrations left their marks too, putting the brakes on the dreams, expressed by Jaume Bofill (better known by his poetic pseudonym, Guerau de Liost), that Barcelona, as capital of Catalonia, should become an amplified temple or Acropolis —"[t]ota Capital és l'espandiment d'una acròpolis" (1)— and a summation and generalization of refinement and tolerance (3). If the post-war period would be characterized by tolerance of a more repressive sort and by refinement of a decidedly more delimited sort, it would also come to be characterized, as the years of hunger gave way to the profitability of Spanish difference, by the reinvigoration of a mode of life and of production intensely bound up in global capitalism. Eugeni d'Ors in a *glosa* from 1906 (and hence long before both the civil war and its aftermath) praised London for being, as he put it, "una gran Ciutat, plena, activa, *normal*, històrica i constantment renovellada alhora" (25, emphasis original). Little did d'Ors realize that an active, historical, and constantly renewed city, a *normal* city, in most of Europe at least, would by the end of the twentieth century become a tourist city.

The power of tourism, without which Barcelona would be hard pressed to maintain its train of life, entails, as has been intimated above, a certain seduction, something that has not gone unnoticed by filmmakers, among others. Though the city figures significantly as a site of seduction in such films as Antonioni's *Professione: reporter* (*The Passenger*) and Almodóvar's *Todo sobre mi madre*, two examples by Catalan directors will here have to suffice: Marta Balletbò-Coll's *Costa Brava* and Ventura's Pons' *Food of Love* both present homosexual, trans-national couples whose tales of friendship, love, and sex are played out against the glittering backdrop of modernist architecture —more ironically presented in Balletbò-Coll's case, more lovingly in Pons' case. They are also inflected by an Olympian or rather post-Olympian perspective (again, more ironically in one than in the other), which helped fuel investment and revitalize the city and its modernist legacy after decades of Francoist repression. The Olympian perspective was subsequently endorsed by the Royal Institute of British Architects, which in 1999 granted its prestigious prize for the first time in its history to a city rather than to an architect or team of architects—another much-touted triumph of the municipal government. Although Barcelona's Arc de Triomf dates from the 1888 Exposition, the triumphant rhetoric of the Olympics also harks back to the 1929 Exposition, which, though held under less than optimal conditions (the Primo de Rivera dictatorship),

spurred the urbanization of Montjuïc. Infamous as the site of a military fortress and political executions, Montjuïc became with the 1929 Exposition a site for drop-jawed awe and leisure, as visitors strolled through the proto-theme park known as El Poble Espanyol, watched the show of water and electric lights at the Plaça d'Espanya, and visited what would become (with the passing of time and the transformation of taste) one of the most celebrated structures of any Exposition ever: Mies van der Rohe's sleek, simple, and "revolutionary" German Pavilion, which has become an almost obligatory reference in any history of modern architecture. So important did the legacy of the international style of modern architecture prove to be that the German Pavilion was reconstructed in 1986 under a Socialist government already gearing up for the Olympics (interestingly Barcelona had lost to Berlin a bid for what would become the notorious 1936 Olympics). And though it is no match for the Sagrada Família, the Palau de la Música Catalana, or the Museu Picasso in terms of popularity, the reconstructed German Pavilion has its place too on the tourist maps.

The repeated refashioning and constant newness (the oxymoron is deliberate) by which modernity passes are such that structures made of otherwise permanent materials —the steel, glass, marble, and travertine of the German Pavilion, for instance— are cast in an impermanent mode.[7] So cast, they are susceptible to the recuperation that goes, still now, by the name of postmodernism. Out of fashion, discarded and set aside, these structures, like so much else, can become, with time, invested with a renewed appeal, an additional value: that of history. For history is also caught in the web of commodity fetishism, served up, over and anew, in retrospectives, reconstructions, and rehabilitations that endow the remains of the demolished walls of the city, or the foundations of earlier buildings in the Mercat del Born, or the façades of many a gutted house, with a value that, behind or beneath the gleam of permanence, is both buffeted and buttressed by the forces of the market. True, under Franco, when history had become for many a nightmare too unbearable to retain and for others a luxury too costly to preserve, a great deal of the city, and particularly whatever did not meet the dictates of the official story, was scrapped, abandoned, or redone in a harder, colder, more efficient guise. In more local terms, this is the era of mayor José María de Porcioles, under whose rule an often unruly post-War turn to mass

7. The impermanence of potentially more permanent structures antedates the 1929 Exposition significantly. In the 1888 Exposition, the Gran Hotel Internacional by Lluís Domènech i Montaner, one of the greatest of modernist architects working in Catalonia, was built with the intention of being demolished —as indeed it was— shortly after the close of the event. Clearly, insofar as World's Fairs are concerned, the concept of built-in obsolescence has a particularly extensive history.

housing projects and automobile-driven sprawl took place, overwhelming, in the process, both a beleaguered Modernist model and a beleaguered *Noucentista* counter-model. During nearly forty years of dictatorship, such matters as citizen's rights, aesthetics, and the environment were severely compromised, even ignored. And yet, as Hughes and others have noted, the situation was certainly not limited to Barcelona, for the sprawl, massification, and automotive disregard for pedestrians affected cities under both liberal democratic and state-run communist regimes as well. Many recent projects —such as the creation of public parks and squares in peripheral neighborhoods, or the establishment of pedestrian zones in more centrally located neighborhoods, or the construction of highways that facilitate rapid transportation among long unconnected neighborhoods (and that are often underground or tree-lined to boot)— have attempted to correct the deficiencies of the past and to promote a more comfortable, pleasing, and civic-minded city without sacrificing efficiency and productivity.

Urban sprawl and the attempts to correct it are symptomatic of substantive changes in the conceptualization and constitution of cities in a global age. Immigration, first from the Catalan countryside, then from other parts of Spain (most notably Andalusia and Murcia), and most recently from Latin America, the Maghreb, Eastern Europe, Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa, has profoundly altered the city —altered it, even as it has (re)made it. Barcelona, like any large city, is large not because of the rabbit-like fertility and steel-like health of its inhabitants (who nonetheless enjoy one of the highest rates of longevity in the world), but because of immigration. Whatever challenges immigration entails, the city would be a much more homogenous and stagnant place, a much duller and drier place, let alone a much smaller and more provincial place, without the presence deep inside it of people from outside it. While challenges of racial intolerance, integration, segregation, cultural clash, and disenfranchisement can be found in any number of cities throughout the world, one of the challenges that complicates the already complex phenomenon of immigration and that obtains with special force in Barcelona (as a "bilingual" city) bears on the Catalan language, its present and future in an era of increasing globalization in which only a few languages are deemed "reasonable" for international communication.

Long suppressed by the central government as contrary to a unity rationalized as essential to both tradition and modernity alike, Catalan acquired a political charge in virtually all areas of expression, including popular music. Joan Manuel Serrat, one of the leading members of the Nova Cançó movement of the 1960s (which vindicated freedom of expression in the Catalan language), was forced

to withdraw from the 1968 Eurovision music contest because he refused to sing the otherwise anodyne "La, la, la" in Castilian, that is to say, Spanish. Instructive as the scandal of the Eurovision contest may be, a brief excursion into fiction may more effectively convey what is here at play: in Maria Barbal's *Pedra de tartera* and *Mel i metzines*, the protagonists recall being confused and constrained, as children, by the institutionalized weight of Castilian in the educational system of their native Catalonia. In a rigidly dictated educational system, modernization and progress, they learn, are taught to be all but unthinkable in Catalan: to get ahead in Spain is to move away from any language other than Castilian. Tellingly, and among all the imbalances, many of the Castilian-speaking immigrants whose adventures Barbal recounts in *Carrer Bolívia* believe that progress also takes a specific linguistic form: for them, Catalan. Controversy regarding the status of Catalan and the stakes of progress in a democratically constituted regime continues to this day, most obviously in relation to the recently proposed revisions to the Estatut d'Autonomia de Catalunya of 1979. Progress, clearly enough, has been voiced in a number of contrasting, conflicting, far from equitable ways.

One of the least equitable manifestations of progress is what is politely known as urban renewal and less politely known as gentrification. Josep Maria Benet i Jornet, in his play *Olors*, and José Luís Guerín, in his film *En construcción*, offer critical takes on the transformation of the Raval, an area that is increasingly home to Pakistani, Moroccan, and other immigrants, but which has historically been home to some of the poorest denizens of the metropolis. In Benet's play, Maria, the protagonist, ridicules the utopian aspirations of contemporary "creative" architects and lambastes the erasure of the memory of the poor: "No hi quedarà res que recordi la manera de viure dels que van fer la ciutat dels pobres. Pobres, què he dit! Quin horror de paraula! Quina paraula més ridícula! Hem de parlar de pobres a la meravellosa Barcelona d'avui?" (70). Even as she invokes the poor, Maria finds the very word —"poor"— absurdly out of place in contemporary Barcelona, where politically backed urban planners and architects, armed with (the rhetoric of) good intentions, leave some of the poorest parts of the city without "un racó per guardar la memòria" (69-70). To be sure, many architects, urban planners, and architectural scholars have themselves made similar criticisms, not just of the transformation of the Raval and other parts of the old city but also, and even more intensely, of the mammoth urban projects associated with the Fòrum 2004, a much-hyped, would-be follow-up to the Olympics, located in a post-industrial section of the city beside the River Besòs. The Fòrum, which was publicized under the banner of diversity, sustainability, and peace, but which relied on huge sums

of money from multinational corporations and was not "free and open" to the public, motivated thousands to protest what they saw as the hypocrisy of its claims.[8] According to the critics of the Fòrum, Barcelona was once again being converted, perhaps even more than ever, into a shopping center in which the poor and disenfranchised, those without papers or work, or without any real job security, found themselves effectively cast as the least inviting subjects of the so-called Barcelona model, a model of urban renewal and refashioning that has generated such buzz, activity, and money in the late twentieth century.

While it is true, as Oriol Nel·lo notes, that statistical data indicate that urban growth since the 1990s has been accompanied in the greater Barcelona area by "una certa disminució de les desigualtats en la distribució de la renda, tant des del punt de vista territorial com de l'estrictament social" (127), it is also true, as Nel·lo goes on to note, that serious problems remain. As I write this, urban unrest in France has laid bare the failure of a system that, captivated by the ideology of universalism, has assiduously avoided any substantive recognition of the complex intersections of economic disenfranchisement (i.e. poverty) and ethnic, racial, and national difference. The unrest, spilling over into Belgium, Holland, and Germany, has left many in Catalonia wondering if the same could happen here —and imagining all sorts of measures lest Barcelona, once the Manchester of Spain, become the Lyon of Spain. Some, all too many, wax nostalgic for supposedly simpler, more homogeneous times when a Barcelonan was a Barcelonan, a Catalan a Catalan; others, among them writer Juan Goytisolo, recognize that globalization is irreversible and that among its many undeniable problems it contains the promise for a more pluralistic and promiscuous society, for more diverse conceptions of who a Barcelonan is, who a Catalan is. It is in this spirit that Goytisolo advocates: "una Barcelona de tagalos y negros, capaces de recitar de memoria, con inefable acento, la Oda patriótica de Maragall." To my eyes, the eyes of an (admittedly privileged) outsider who no longer feels quite outside, Goytisolo's image, utopian as it may be, may also —with time, intelligence, and a concerted effort— prove to be the proverbial real thing.

The interplays between images and reality (or perhaps more accurately, realities) are at the heart of the essays that follow in this special number of *Catalan Review*. The essays are, with very few

8. See Borja and Muxí's *L'espai públic*, which contains critical contributions on the Rambla del Raval (Carles Ribas and Joan Subirats), the Maremàgnum (Muxí), the Plaça dels Àngels (Isabel Bachs), and other areas. For (highly critical) critical readings of the Fòrum, see Horta's *L'espai clos* and the Unió Temporal d'Escribes' *Ba®celona, marca registrada*.

exceptions, revised and expanded versions of papers presented between April 22 and 25, 2004 at a symposium titled "Barcelona and Modernity" that I organized at Harvard University with the inestimable input of my assistant, Anna Llauradó, and the generous support of the Real Colegio Complutense (specifically, Ángel Sáenz-Badillos) and the Institut Ramon Llull (specifically, Àlex Susanna and Victòria Oliva Buxton). Although the work of most of the speakers is here included, the work of others —Victòria Combalia, Jaume Martí-Olivella, Marta Balletbò-Coll, Joan Ramon Resina, Juan José Lahuerta, and David Leavitt— is, for various reasons, absent. The present selection maintains, however, the spirit of interdisciplinary inquiry and intellectual exchange that characterized the symposium; offerings in the fields of literature and literary history, linguistics, art history and visual critique, film, architecture and urban design, urban ethnography, philosophy, theater, and advertising managed to bracket for a few days the hyperspecialization that has sapped the study of culture, still enthralled, particularly in Spain, to disciplinary protocols and turf wars. The presence in the present volume of novelists (Maria Barbal), directors (Ventura Pons), playwrights (Josep Maria Benet i Jornet), architects (Josep Maria Montaner and Zaida Muxí), poets (Francesc Parcerisas, who here writes as a critic), and artists (Joan Fontcuberta, who also here writes as a critic), some of whom have extensive experience as teachers, further complicates and enriches the presence —more standard in *Catalan Review* and other academic journals— of literary critical writers such as Geoffrey Ribbans, Enric Bou, Josep Miquel Sobrer, Sharon Feldman, Jordi Castellanos, and myself. The creative-literary critical distinction is in many respects specious, however, and is certainly insufficient; the philosophical work of Xavier Rubert de Ventós, the urban ethnographic work of Manuel Delgado, and the statistically based linguistic work of Lloreng Comajoan, different as one is from the other, all engage the challenges and benefits of community, of what Rubert de Ventós calls "l'intent de relacionar-se amb els altres."

Given their appreciation of openness and of the multifariousness of communication, these three very different essays (by Rubert de Ventós, Delgado, and Comajoan) fittingly open the present volume. They are followed by a series of literary essays by Geoffrey Ribbans (on Joan Maragall), Francesc Parcerisas (on poetic images of the city), Josep Miquel Sobrer (on three odes to Barcelona and Almodóvar's *All About my Mother*), Jordi Castellanos (on high and low urban images), and Enric Bou (on literary itineraries). Sharon Feldman rounds out the literary examinations by setting her sights on the presence and absence of Barcelona on the contemporary Catalan stage. Feldman's meditation on visibility and theatricality serves as a nice entry into

three visually oriented essays: Joan Fontcuberta on Joan Colom's photographs of prostitutes in the Raval; Jordana Mendelson on publicity and propaganda in the 1930s; and Josep Maria Montaner and Zaida Muxí on contemporary architecture. The volume closes with a group of self-reflective accounts by three of the most significant figures of contemporary Catalan culture: Maria Barbal on three of her novels that foreground immigration; Josep Maria Benet i Jornet on forty years of theater in Barcelona; and Ventura Pons on his English-language film *Food of Love*, in which the enticements of Barcelona figure prominently. Inasmuch as each of the articles in this volume is preceded by an abstract that gives a sense of what lies therein, I will here only say that together they provide a glimpse into the promises and problems, achievements and challenges, of a city that enlists the concern, commitment, and affection of all who here reflect on it: modern Barcelona.

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